Report to the
Auburn City Council

To:	Mayor and City Council Members
From:	Stephanie Snyder, City Clerk
	Amy M. Lind, CMC, Deputy/Assistant City Clerk
Date:	March 25, 2013
Subject:	City Clerk's Office Update

The Issue

This is an informational report on the City Clerk's Office that asks the City Council to give conceptual approval to the priority of upgrading the City Clerk's Office with software and related hardware subject to available funds in the coming year.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Accept report on the City Clerk's Office and operations, give feedback on desired outcomes, and indicate conceptual approval for staff to proceed with modernizing the office with a document and agenda management system within the upcoming budget decisions for FY 2013-14.

Background

It is customary for City departments to give periodic information reports to the City Council about key functional areas, significant outcomes, meaningful metrics, etc. The primary purpose of this update is to set the same expectation for the City Clerk's Office so that the public and the City Council are apprised of where we have been, where we are now and where we see ourselves going. Additionally, bringing the update *at this time* allows staff to have the benefit of Council input on priorities as the FY 2013-14 budget process approaches.

Three months time is not enough to give a detailed assessment of office operations and needs, but even in this short time there are some clear indications of areas ripe for improvement and efficiencies. These three months have been busy for the City Clerk's Office, kicking off the year with plans for three new projects that have never before been on the radar screen for this office.

First, we learned that the public had a pent-up desire for more proactive information on City business and happenings. In small cities where staff members usually wear many different "hats," it is not unreasonable to expect the City Clerk's Office to take on a public information role as an extension of the record keeper function and general hub of official actions and activities. We pulled together a team to

design both a product and an efficient process for easy, ongoing maintenance. We established clear and concise objectives and measurements of success before beginning. As a result, last month we launched "Auburn's *Fast*News," an electronic bulletin of timely, short "stories" that is now being published twice a month within a week of each City Council meeting. It is available on the home page of the website, but also more easily sent to a growing list of interested community residents who choose to subscribe. After only three editions, response is positive and enthusiasm is strong. It appears to have hit the intended mark.

The second targeted project is an upgrade of the physical technology in the City Council Chambers. With a goal of more reliable and efficient work products, this is an easily attainable goal that is currently budgeted and addresses needs of all those who use the Chambers and are responsible for maintaining public records of the actions that take place here. We introduced laptop computers for taking real-time action minutes and that change has already reduced the staff time needed for the completed end product. We will very soon see the ability to produce approved resolutions immediately following a Council or Planning Commission meeting, dramatically reducing the time before staff can move ahead. One very important aspect of this project is working with our partners at Auburn Community Television (ACTV) to ensure a high quality televised product and predictable, dependable schedule so the public will know when to tune in and watch. The horizon for completion of all these physical changes is primarily dependent upon the Technology Commission's schedule to advise and assist with the hardware decisions and installation, but comfortably estimated by the end of the fiscal year.

Finally, the largest project is currently in the research stages since it will take methodical assessment, thoughtful analysis, and a dedicated investment. Specifically, we are exploring the benefits of a document and agenda management system, or an electronic way to streamline the agenda process through automation that enables electronic item creation, routing for approvals, and eventually compilation into a dynamic agenda, online and paperless. This type of automation reduces staff processing time and materials, as well as paper and printing costs.

An agenda management solution can also more easily make agendas and supporting documents available via the City's website. It can allow us to stream and record video and audio information, which is then time stamped and tied directly to the corresponding agenda item. The technology allows members of the public and staff to use simple online searches to access and watch council meetings, or go directly to certain agenda items or video clips. Mobile technology also makes it possible to access these items from a laptop or tablet, using logic similar to our *Fast*News concept of getting what you need quickly—"Click, Read. On your way."

Here are just a few of the capabilities of an agenda management system that could bring the City Clerk's Office into the 21st century, make it more efficient, and give Auburn citizens better transparency:

- Facilitate public access through full text search of streaming video, agendas, minutes, summaries and attachments online
- Post summaries, agendas with attachments, minutes and streaming video to the web
- Create and submit agenda items with attachments online, and electronically route items for approval
- Compile final agenda packets, including all supporting material, with one-click

The next steps for this project include: identification of useful tools and outcomes; best vendor, product, payment options and prices available; and reasonable testing and implementation schedule. A project of this size and nature includes the time to fold in several key City staff members and functions to ensure no system redundancy or unintended consequences. Depending on the product chosen, there may also be future opportunities to expand into modules for electronic records management for other City departments, if desired. It is an ambitious endeavor with commensurate value and can be accomplished within a month or two of determining the desired product.

In conclusion, it is also very important to note that the three projects started over the last three months and discussed in this report are being researched, worked on and fine-tuned *in addition to* the everyday, normal work of the City Clerk's Office. We continue to meet our ongoing, statutory responsibilities with the timely attention, precision and skill that the City Council and Auburn citizens expect and deserve. At the same time, we are always looking for ways to "go the extra mile." We are also very cognizant that there are other projects in our office that need attention over the next year, but it is our professional advice that this proposal is the healthiest place to start.

To maintain this momentum, the City Clerk's Office and the City Manager look for input from the City Council that we are all interested in moving in the same direction to modernize and equip the office to provide more efficient and effective operations. This direction will allow staff to fold it into priorities for the FY 2013-14 budget, and next year's update on the City Clerk's Office will include even more accomplishments.

Alternatives Available to Council

Do not approve in concept the acquisition of an appropriate and cost-effective document and agenda management system for the City Clerk's Office to be included in the upcoming budget, and continue using technology and labor as it existed in the past.

Fiscal Impacts

None for FY 2012-13. Estimated not to exceed $35,000 for initial investment in the FY 2013-14 budget, with annual ongoing maintenance estimated at less than $5,000 beginning in FY 2014-15.

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